



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
North Country National Scenic Trail
P.O. Box 288
Lowell, Michigan 49331



FILE: Item 1

September 6, 2017

Committee on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Response to HB 4782, amending 1949 PA 300 entitled "Michigan Vehicle Code."

Dear Committee on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 4782 regarding use of electric bicycles (e-bikes). In general we support activities that engage the public with their public lands, including e-bikes. But in the case of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST), this legislation will potentially have severe impacts upon the integrity of the trail.

NCNST is administered by the National Park Service under the authority of the National Trails System Act, amended March 30, 2009. NCNST is a sister trail to ten other national scenic trails including the Appalachian Trail and the Continental Divide Trail. At 4,600 miles in length it is the longest of our nation's National Scenic Trails. Its integrity lies in the partnerships created and sustained as the trail grows across seven states from New York to North Dakota. We cherish and appreciate our partnership with the state of Michigan.

The North Country National Scenic Trail (authorized under the National Trails System Act) is a non-motorized trail:

In Section 7 (c) of the Act it states "National scenic or national historic trails may contain campsites, shelters, and related-public-use facilities. Other uses along the trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, may be permitted by the Secretary charged with the administration of the trail....The use of motorized vehicles by the general public along any national scenic trail shall be prohibited ."

The Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of the Trail (1982) reiterates the non-motorized mandate of the National Trails System Act.

The Foundation Document for North Country National Scenic Trail, 2015, further reinforces the Trail's non-motorized status by stating "The nature and purposes of North Country Trail is to provide a non-motorized trail offering world-class walking and hiking experiences within a protected trailway and landscape through the northern heartlands of America."

It is my position that motorized bikes of any class are prohibited and are not compatible with the nature and purposes of the Trail on any present or future segment of the North Country Trail.



North Country Trail segments that are authorized as motorized (including e-bikes) by the managing authority as a result of this proposed legislation, will lose their certified status as a National Scenic Trail, and revert to a temporary connector status until such time that alternative routes for the Trail are determined that bypass the local authority or agency of the state that authorized motorized use.

Additionally, we have studied the proposed legislation and have line-by-line comments that we are happy to discuss with staff responsible for the refinement of HB 4782. My contact information is below.

Please include the National Park Service in any future notifications regarding this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Mark Weaver
Superintendent, North Country National Scenic Trail
Office: 616-319-7906 x 3
Cell: 616 430-3495
Email: mark_weaver@nps.gov

Cc: A. Ketchmark